

MILK PRODUCTION COSTS

Limerick's Call To Minister

PLIGHT OF DAIRY INDUSTRY

Action Of Agricultural Committee

For three hours last Saturday, Limerick County Committee of Agriculture, Mr. John Quaid, Co.C., Chairman, presiding, discussed once more the position of dairy farming and of milk production in County Limerick. The discussion arose when Mr. Michael O'Donnell, Co.C., moved a motion to the effect that the costings attached to the production of milk in County Limerick be fully discussed by the Committee.

Mr. O'Donnell, at the outset, suggested that the discussion be in committee, because, he said, the present time might not be appropriate to have the contributions to such a discussion broadcast through the Press.

Mr. J. Canty, Co.C., asked Mr. O'Donnell to withdraw this suggestion; it could only do the industry good if every individual discussion were fully published.

Mr. M. J. K. Dore, solr., Co.C., supported Mr. Canty. The question to be discussed was a most serious one, in fact the life and death of an industry, and he could see no good reason why the matter should be considered behind closed doors. He would suggest, however, that in view of the seriousness of the question, that the Committee adjourn the discussion on it to a special meeting, to which all the public representatives in County Limerick—the T.D.s and Senators—should be invited. Such a meeting would arm the public representatives with first-hand information, with which to present a case for the dairy farmers to the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. O'Donnell agreed to have the subject of his notice of motion discussed in public.

DEBATE IN SENATE.

Senator Madden, Co.C., reviewed what he described as a most important discussion on the question of milk supplies, which occurred in the Senate the previous week, on the motion of Senators Sweetman and Baxter, and to which he said he contributed at length. It had been mentioned during the Senate discussion that, in order to preserve the dairying industry from extinction the price of milk delivered to creameries should be increased without delay. The discussion started at three o'clock in the afternoon and lasted until 10.15 that night. Every possible avenue of the whole agricultural economy in the country was discussed. The cost to the consumer of a gallon of milk was very clearly and reasonably submitted by the twenty Senators who contributed to the discussion. The Minister for Agriculture was at that session and was obviously most perturbed. He (Senator Madden) submitted figures and a map (produced), which indicated County Limerick's importance in the agricultural economy of the country. He was able to point out to the House at that discussion that out of 137 million gallons of milk produced annually in this country, 62.4 per cent came from Cork and Limerick and 57.62 per cent came from Limerick alone.

Senator Madden continued that when the Minister replied to the discussion he did so in a most serious manner, indicative of the keen interest he took in the entire matter. He (the Minister) mentioned that when travelling some days previously through the South he was amazed to find some of the creameries manufacturing bye-products other than butter, and for some time considered whether he should immediately make an order forbidding such manufacture. He decided, however, that when the emergency was over the manufacturers of these bye-products might find it difficult to re-establish business contacts lost through the operation of such an order and, instead of prohibiting the manufacture of milk bye-products, he decided to consider the bringing of the various non-creamery districts under the butter rationing scheme. The Minister's remarks on the subject, however, left him (Senator Madden) with the very definite impression that there might not be a Government licence available for the proposed new factory in Newcastle West, in which Mr. Dore was interested.

MILK SENT AWAY.

Proceeding, Senator Madden condemned the practice which he said

professional coster would mean that these figures would be set out in an orderly way, which the Minister would be bound to consider seriously.

"VERY PRECARIOUS GROUND."

"Taking everything into consideration," Mr. Dore went on, "the dairy farmer at the moment is on very precarious ground. If business men had to suffer anything like his setbacks, they would be out of business in a very short time. In view of all these circumstances, I think it would be most advisable to get a professional coster to assist us in compiling our figures."

The Chairman pointed out that the Committee had no provision for the payment of such a coster. Besides, it might well be that they would be surcharged on outlay in this direction.

Mr. Dore said that the cost of employing such a coster would be only about £16, and he thought if there was no other way out of it, the members of the Committee would all contribute to the payment of a coster, with the life or death of the primary industry of this country at stake. That the whole agricultural economy of this country hinged on the dairying industry had been mentioned by An Taoiseach recently at Mallow, and, that being so, everything possible should be done to save it from extinction. He would therefore propose that the Committee employ a coster to go into figures submitted to him by the Committee at a special meeting in the near future, and to subsequently compile a report on that data.

The Chairman asked Mr. Dore to amend his proposition to one calling on the Minister to sanction the appointment by the Committee of such a coster.

STRIKING FIGURES.

Mr. P. Maguire produced a letter from a co-operative creamery and said that the information it contained to the effect that its supplies had fallen from 7,161,507 gallons in 1936, to 4,974,174 gallons in 1946, was a sure indication of the almost desperate position of dairy farming in this country at the moment, and definitely discredited the idea that the cow population had not diminished. Illustrating the contention that dairy farmers at the moment were working at dead losses, he took the case of a farmer with a bawn of fifteen cows and gave an estimate of the income and outlay of such a farmer, not taking his capital expenditure. The cost of employing a labourer, between wages and the cost of his food, would amount to £115. The farmer, who managed the farm, was surely entitled to the same allowance as his man, and making provision for such an allowance, the costs went up another £115 to £230. If this farmer fed his cows on hay alone, it would cost him at least £60 for the year. His income from the produce of the fifteen cows amounted to £279 17s., so that after meeting all the outlays mentioned, and without making provision for depreciation in his herd, he and his wife and possibly, a large family were supposed to live on the balance of £39 17s. That, concluded Mr. Maguire, was the very serious position in which dairy farmers found themselves in this country at the moment.

Mr. Sean Hayes, Co. C.—They would not even qualify for the Old Age Pension.

PROBABLE INCOME.

Mr. D. P. Quish, Co. C., presented the position of the farmer with a bawn of 16 cows. He estimated the total outlay of such a farmer, and made provision for labour and maintenance of the herd on the debit side, and on the credit side, gave gross income from milk sales at £332 13s. 4d., and allowed the sum of £16 for the possible sixteen calves which the cows would produce during the year. It would be impossible, he said, to expect a dairy farmer to survive as such, under such conditions. "I can see no hope at all other than a complete extinction of dairy farming in this country if the price of milk is not increased considerably," Mr. Quish concluded.

Mr. O'Donnell also submitted calculations of the cost of milk production to the average farmer, which, he said, showed how impos-

PLAYED BIG PART

In The I.R.A. Struggle

THE LATE FRANK LYNCH

The sad news of the death of Mr. Frank Lynch was received in Caherconlish on Tuesday morning, the 4th inst. Frank first gained popularity in the hurling field when he was a mere school boy, and throughout his life he won the admiration of all who came in contact with him, whether on the hurling field, in the national movement, or otherwise.

Frank joined the Irish Volunteers as a mere youth and his sincerity and fiery energy brought him into early conflict with the R.I.C. About 1919 the local R.I.C. attempted to arrest Comdt. Richard O'Connell in Caherconlish, but Frank Lynch and his two brothers, Sean and Stephen, immediately attacked and beat off the R.I.C. with hurleys, for which all were subsequently arrested and sentenced to six months imprisonment.

ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION ON RELEASE.

On the occasion of their release, contingents of Volunteers from Ballybricken, Caherconlish and Murroe met the released prisoners at Boxer Station and escorted them to Caherconlish, where they were given an enthusiastic reception. This early attempt to break the national spirit did not succeed where the Lynch brothers were concerned, and after release they intensified their activities and all three brothers joined the Mid-Limerick Flying Column at its inception.

Frank was always ready and willing to perform the most arduous and daring tasks and news of possible fresh activities seemed to give him renewed energy. At night as we sat around the fire in the old shack his lively banter and hearty laugh helped to lighten our worries and increase our morale.

CAPTURED IN FRIEND'S HOUSE.

One evening when the flying column was billeted in Ballybricken, Frank Lynch and James Purcell (R.I.P.) went to the house of Mr. Michael Hennessy, and while there a British military patrol approached the house on foot, leaving the lorry some distance away.

The military were not seen until they were actually in the house, and Frank was captured. In the meantime news of the approaching lorry had reached the column, and we immediately decided to attack. As we approached the road a message was received to the effect that Frank Lynch was a prisoner in the lorry and it was agreed there and then that we could not risk endangering Frank's life by opening fire on the enemy. Although inside the fence, within a few yards of the enemy we were obliged to hold our fire, for our regard for Frank outweighed our desire to attack, even though the enemy was completely at our mercy. Frank was taken to police headquarters at Pallas, where he was subjected to the usual fruitless threats and questioning, after which he was sent to England for interment in Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

IN THE NATIONAL ARMY.

After release from prison, Frank joined the National Army, and was given the rank of Lieutenant. In the Army he resumed his Gaelic activities, and played with his brother, Sean, on the Command hurling team. He retired from the Army in 1928, but during the recent emergency he again resumed his military activities, this time as Assistant Group Leader, Caherconlish Company, L.D.F.

His unexpected death caused widespread regret, evidence of which was shown in the large and representative attendance at his funeral.

The coffin was draped in the tricolour, and a guard of honour of Old I.R.A. comrades marched beside the hearse. Outside the village the coffin was taken from the hearse and borne on the shoulders of old comrades and friends through the village to the family burial ground.

Rev. Father McCormack, P.P., and Rev. Father Holloway, C.C., Caherline, officiated at the graveside.

THE LAST POST.

A military bugler from Sarsfield Barracks sounded the last post, and as the final notes resounded through the village many people could be seen in tears, as they realised their significance and the fact that Frank, who was beloved by all, had been "called home" to his final reward.

May the sod rest lightly on his breast, and may his soul rest in peace. M. P.

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